

Cultural policy as biopolitics

The case of Arthur Engberg

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Since the Constitution of 1809, censorship of the printed press has formally been abolished in Sweden, thus affording extensive publishing rights to writers and publishers with only a few legal limits.¹ Importantly, though, this freedom of speech has not excluded the production and circulation of literature from the government's sphere of interest.² On the contrary, throughout the twentieth century, the emerging welfare state implemented a range of political measures that suggests an extraordinary interest in questions of literature and its production. Not only effecting its social and material conditions, these developments also highlight a transformation of the conception of literature—casting it as an endangered species in need of protection and support. For this reason, the question of milieu—that is, the ideal conditions for literature's growth—at the same time became a critical issue in political discourse. In the following, we outline and analyse this new understanding of literature, exemplifying its articulation through the published works of Arthur Engberg, Minister of Church and Education in the Social Democrat governments of 1932–1939.³

While censorship generally imposes restrictions on free speech within the judicial sphere, the regulative ambitions of the welfare state extend beyond it. Thus, Scandinavian cultural policy in the twentieth century sought to intervene in the production, circulation, and consumption of literary texts, either by issuing grants

and subsidies intended to safeguard the autonomy of literature, or by supporting public libraries in the hope of securing literature's diversity and accessibility. From their initial implementation until only recently, these support measures were explicitly justified as possible means to counteract commercial interests.⁴ Reforms of this kind, then, may be regarded as an attempt to advance and defend qualitative art and literature over more popular cultural expressions such as commercial films, popular music, and weekly magazines.

As cultural policy research has shown, however, 'quality' is a vague and ideologically freighted notion. Since quality in the early twentieth century was implicitly equated with 'high art', the concomitant development of the democratic subject thus formed an aesthetic education determined by the tastes of the cultivated bourgeoisie.⁵ While public authorities were founded in order for the cultural heritage to be disseminated to a larger population, they effected a cultural democratization built on inherently elitist grounds.⁶ According to this widely accepted interpretation, early cultural policy follows a logic of distribution—ambitioning to transmit a predetermined, qualitative content to a number of recipient subjects; in this case, uncultivated workers and children. As we will argue, however, Engberg's writings effectively challenge this view by outlining a more complex form of literary regulation, better described in terms of biopolitics than distribution. Furthermore, Engberg's standpoint on cultural policy requires us to expand the notion of 'quality' beyond the discourse of aesthetic judgement. For Engberg, quality was no less than the telos of the welfare state.

Engberg is well known to researchers of Nordic cultural policy, and is generally considered an important, if esoteric and high-flown, influence on Swedish politics. Summarizing the current view within scholarship, Tobias Harding remarks that Engberg appears to be defined by seeming ideological paradoxes.⁷ While his early years were spent on the far left wing of the Social Democratic Party (SAP), Engberg's socialist rhetoric would eventually soften.⁸ On account of his taste for the classics, his relentless insistence on

their importance for the citizen's education, and his distaste for jazz, movies, and virtually all innovations in the arts, Engberg has instead been remembered as a champion of bourgeois culture.

However, to regard Engberg as a closet conservative, or, like Geir Vestheim, to label him a backward-looking reactionary on account of his aesthetic preferences, is to judge him by the inclusive ideals of current cultural policy.⁹ Equally important, such a view disregards those aspects of his thinking that fall outside the scope of contemporary politics. That the veritable rage of Engberg's youth, informed by a Marxist analysis of capitalist society, subsided in the 1930s must in part be attributed to the internal ideological conflicts of the SAP.¹⁰ Thus, following the general observations of Nils and Lars Beltzén, the present study instead underscores Engberg's ideological consistency throughout his political career.¹¹ Above all, Engberg all of his life remained faithful to an idea of societal transformation, which has been disregarded in previous studies. Without a clear notion of this positive vision, constitutive elements of his thinking are bound to appear paradoxical.¹²

Methodologically, we approach Engberg's writings by way of Michel Foucault and his studies of the formation of the modern nation-state, the particular form of power it articulates, and the different 'arts of governing' developed in its name.¹³ Foucault's insistence on investigating the processes and practices in which concepts are formed also opens a new line of inquiry in regard to previous research. Earlier commentators have indeed concentrated on the allegedly elitist dichotomy of high art and popular culture in the political discourse of the early twentieth century. By contrast, we seek to elaborate Engberg's central concepts from within his writings. Instead of asking to what extent Engberg was conservative or progressive, we aim to abstract from his texts a conceptual scheme that rationally connects notions such as art, literature, *Bildung*, and culture.

In line with Foucault, our primary object is not the actual practice of governance in the Swedish welfare state; instead, we outline the art of governing as it developed in Engberg's speeches and

articles. Thus, our study does not evaluate the regulation of literature exercised by cultural policy, but instead traces the actions and measures which Engberg deemed necessary to realize the ideal conditions of literary production. To this end, Foucault's framework is helpful once more, since it allows for a distinction between different forms and technologies of power with respect to their function and target.

The general relevance of Foucault's work for an analysis of the Swedish welfare state has previously been demonstrated by Sven-Olov Wallenstein, among others. Wallenstein convincingly argues that the brand of functionalism advocated in the 1930s can be seen as an expression of what Foucault calls the biopolitical paradigm.¹⁴ According to Wallenstein, the architecture of the early welfare state operated 'within reality itself, in order to make its components interact in a more profitable fashion.'¹⁵ Without explicitly referencing Foucault, Yvonne Hirdman presents a similar standpoint, suggesting that the architects and politicians of the 1930s took on the role of 'social engineers' in order to shape and govern the everyday life of the population.¹⁶ This specific mode of governance, which intervenes in the fabric of reality so as to adjust and perfect the life of its citizens, will likewise be a central topic in our study of Engberg's writings.

Lastly, two important distinctions need to be made. The Swedish term *kulturpolitik* can signify both 'cultural policy' and the wider concept of 'cultural politics': while the former refers to a specific policy area, the latter encompasses the whole range of meanings pertaining to the concept of 'culture'. My Klocker Linder's study of the term *kulturpolitik* suggests that its current technical usage was not popularized until the 1950s.¹⁷ Engberg uses 'cultural politics' in the wide sense of the term, and its exact meaning can only, as we will show, be outlined in relation to his comprehensive political project.¹⁸ Secondly, our investigation will not always be able to distinguish between different forms of art. On the one hand, literature represents a privileged category in Engberg's thinking on account of its central role in the project to safeguard the quality of the Swedish

language and the citizens' language skills. On the other, literature is subsumed in a general category of art, alongside theatre, music, the visual arts, and so on. For this reason, we will henceforth use the terms 'art' and 'literature' interchangeably.

Bildung as the antidote to decadence

To judge from Engberg's general diagnosis of society, the label 'conservative' would surely appear to be justified. The parliamentary debate on the spring budget in 1921 is a case in point. Here, the young Engberg spoke at length about the threats of degeneration facing contemporary culture, underscoring the high stakes by presenting national cultivation as a call to arms: 'As I see it, this cultural budget ... is of extraordinary significance for the whole of our nation and its position. It is a budget of war in the battle for culture and the nation's upbringing and awakening.'¹⁹ The militaristic rhetoric, typical of the discourse of culture at the end of the long nineteenth century, reflects the Spenglerian influence on Engberg.²⁰ In this regard, his outburst against celebrity and sports culture, warranted by a French boxing star's visit to Sweden, serves as a further example:

such a degeneration into cult of raw strength and muscle-culture is a sign of decadence that one must watch out for. When nations have previously met their doom, history has shown us similar examples. As spectators watched the gladiators enter the arena in old Rome, antique culture had practically ended. Let us make sure that such omens will not be taken as proof that Swedish culture will tread the same path.²¹

For Engberg, the 'cult of raw strength' around Georges Carpentier not only typified a loathsome form of entertainment culture—'nöjeskultur'—but also indicates a spiritual decay in both the working class and bourgeoisie. From having revered Homer and the classics, even the educated classes now displayed symptoms of cultural rot.

Furthermore, the nation's poor spiritual state must, as Engberg argues, be taken as a premonition, a reminder of the European spirit's 'homelessness' before the outbreak of the First World War.²² While Oswald Spengler's prophecies of the declining West had been an explicit inspiration for Engberg, it is important to note that his response differed profoundly from Spengler's fatalism.²³ While conceding that cultural decay had already spread far, Engberg nonetheless proposes an antidote in the form of a slow but decisive transformation of society.

As will be seen, Engberg's principal strategy for reaching this goal entailed the education and perfection of the citizen through 'bildning' and 'folkbildning'. Engberg uses the terms interchangeably, pointing to the intersection between the German concept of *Bildung* and the Swedish *folkbildning*. The latter usually denotes the democratizing efforts directed at the education and enlightenment of the lower classes, most notably by the labour movement's study associations.²⁴ In *Demokratisk kulturpolitik* (1938), an official SAP campaign pamphlet authored by Engberg, *folkbildning* was presented both as a 'sacrifice' of 'self-interest' in the name of democracy, and as a call for the cultivation of the free individual:

The idea of democracy consists in a free cooperation between independent personalities, which, one for all and all for one, take responsibility for the common weal. The result hereof depends ultimately on the individual himself, on his consideration, insight, skill, and his readiness to sacrifice self-interest for the benefit of the public good. Therefore, democracy and *folkbildning* cannot be separated. They necessitate each other. For no democracy may last and succeed unless it rests upon enlightened, responsible, and independent citizens.²⁵

As Engberg's reasoning makes clear, the citizen's ability of governing him- or herself cannot be taken for granted. On the contrary, he or she must be subjected to 'an omnidirectional ambition to make the citizens meet the demands of self-governance'.²⁶ In order to gain

the privilege of governing themselves, to become ‘independent’ and ‘enlightened’, the citizens must be governed—thus prompting Engberg to consider the ways in which virtues such as freethinking could be imparted.

First and foremost, Engberg stressed that *Bildung* must be distinguished from the simple development of one’s skills and knowledge. ‘Education is one thing, *Bildung* another.’²⁷ What, then, did it mean to educate and improve oneself in this sense of *Bildung*? The question has a special relevance for art and literature, which, as Engberg stressed, ‘can neither be learnt nor practised’, but nonetheless forms an integral part of the ambition to ‘secure the citizens’ acquisition of skills and insights.’²⁸ Obviously, then, the attempt to impart an aesthetic sensibility cannot solely take the form of distribution. On the contrary, as Engberg insisted in a frequently cited passage in *Demokratisk kulturpolitik*, the principal role of the state is to provide the necessary spiritual infrastructure for the citizen’s *Bildung*:

[Democratic cultural politics] has to care for air, space, and light, good communications between the different provinces of spiritual life, counteract attempts at isolation, give aid to self-help for everything that is viable, and promote broad-mindedness and tolerance.²⁹

A more concrete way of providing tools for the citizens’ spiritual awakening may be found in the ‘socialization of art [konstens socialisering].’³⁰ For Engberg, this process consisted in the population’s exposure to major contemporary art alongside cultural treasures of the past—offering a wholesome alternative to the meagre fare of popular culture:

Truth to tell, the cultural reality of the common people is harsh. It takes powerful measures to overcome it and drive it off. In this regard, no other way is possible than to awaken the souls’ longing for something higher and more beautiful. The solution

has already been hinted at: letting the generations, to the highest extent possible, experience art.³¹

In seeking to integrate art into the daily life of all citizens, both in present and coming generations, Engberg attempted to solve a two-fold problem. Firstly, by distributing art to the homes of the poor, it would allow for their sense of style to improve—thus contributing to the ‘spiritual elevation’ of the working class.³² Secondly, it would secure the vitality of art as well as its economic conditions: ‘If art shall live and flourish, it must be embraced by the people’s love and become a life within the life of the people.’³³

This second aspect of art’s socialization is essential. Not only proposing that art should function as a means to refine the taste and sensibility of the population, Engberg saw this process as a vital condition for the qualitative production of art and literature.³⁴ In this regard, the question of socialization necessarily transcends the conventional logic of bourgeois didacticism, ultimately dealing with the fate of art as such. We thus turn to this notion, analysing how the production and experience of art becomes a model for Engberg’s political end-goal: namely, a life in the realm of freedom.

Art as paradigm for a life in freedom

In a 1937 speech at Skansen, an open-air museum in Stockholm, Engberg passionately defended the freedom of the arts and sciences. In fact, Engberg went so far as to suggest that the state’s most fundamental task is to ensure the continued growth of the citizens’ spiritual life in ‘the air of freedom [frihetens luft]’—again, by means of ‘aid to self-help.’³⁵ Here and elsewhere, Engberg’s appreciation of art comes off as purely non-instrumental. Art does not form an ideal on aesthetic grounds, nor is it promoted for its ability to improve the subject’s sensibility; rather, the activity of producing and experiencing art in itself represents an ideal of freedom summarized by the term *självverksamhet*, or self-activity.

The term, adopted from Marx’s concept of *Selbsttätigkeit*, denotes

an activity performed without external cause or influence. While the production of food responds to hunger, the production of clothes to the cold, someone engaging in the production and experience of art responds solely to his or her own pleasure and free will. Again, art understood as ‘self-activity’ does not imply a normative conception of the form and content of art and literature. Rather, art becomes a paradigm—a model—for a form of life in which the individual’s freedom is fully realized.

Already in 1918, Engberg described this final goal of political struggle in terms of a ‘realm of freedom’:

For we must realize ourselves. Thus, the meaning of history is the realization of freedom, and we ourselves have to fulfil this meaning ... Our ‘kingdom of God’ marks the beginning of man’s true history, an end to the ‘prehistory’ of darkness and bondage where the realm of freedom succeeds the realm of necessity.³⁶

In the realm of freedom, work is no longer chosen for reasons of livelihood, but instead—in line with Marx’s argument—becomes an expression of ‘free creation’ withdrawn from the law of necessity.³⁷ Here, work is transformed into yet another form of ‘self-activity’ which, in turn, makes it indistinguishable from art.

This conception of art connects Engberg not only to Marx, but also to the German idealists, and in particular to Friedrich Schiller and his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795). However, a significant difference must be noted in their respective understandings of the state’s role. Like Engberg, Schiller sketched a dark picture of the quality and spiritual level of contemporary life, and, just as in Engberg’s case, neither the cultivated bourgeoisie nor the broader population were spared his judgement.³⁸ Unlike Schiller, though, for whom art provided the soul’s one and only remedy, Engberg was convinced that current circumstances may be altered through governmental practice.³⁹

If decadence was spreading in Swedish culture, Engberg traced its roots to various social and economic structures. It is not, Engberg

writes, again referring to Marx, 'the consciousness of man that forms the base of his social being, but his social existence in itself ... that forms the base of his consciousness.'⁴⁰ Thus, the question of 'how we will create a Swedish national culture' is necessarily dependent on 'the question of restructuring the economic and social life of our society.'⁴¹ In order to establish the necessary conditions for art and literature to flourish, society as a whole must be transformed.

Clearly, then, the efforts to educate and refine the citizen's taste and sensibility cannot secure the future production of art alone. Rather, the socialization of art belongs to a larger project: an art of governing that seeks to affect the reality in which the historical and biological forms of human life are shaped. If, in order to construe the ideal milieu of artistic production, society as a whole must be transformed, then all reforms designed to improve and adjust society must be seen as measures of artistic regulation. Indeed, the welfare apparatus as a whole must, from Engberg's point of view, be conceived as a political technology able to regulate the cultural expressions of the population.⁴² As we will argue next, the rationale behind this idea should be sought in the widespread notion that cultural production and cultural consumption together constitute proper measurements of the population's quality.

Art as expression of the population's life

When Engberg denounced Carpentier's fan base within the bourgeoisie, when he spoke of the rotten core of the educated classes, or even when he lamented the increasing popularity of the accordion on the countryside, cultural consumption was in each case used as an instrument for evaluating the spiritual capacity of Sweden. However, this measure was incomplete if only consumption was accounted for. Of equal, if not greater, importance was the nation's state of production.

In a speech held at the opening of a new school in Eskilstuna, a town famous for its steel industry, Engberg suggested that notions

of character and reputation were directly linked to the quality of one's production:

Undoubtedly, there is some truth to Hegel's idea that the result of a work is the work process, at once preserved and sublated. It seems as if the product sums up and embodies all the active spiritual energies that have been released during the work process. Here, intelligence, volition, and feeling converge. The product then becomes, one might say, a function of all the qualities of the living workforce, of the personality itself.⁴³

Work is a process through which the worker's personality is transferred in its totality, or, in Hegelian terms sublated, into the product. All of the 'spiritual energies' involved—'intelligence, volition, and feeling'—impact on the production process, both in industrial and artistic contexts.⁴⁴ For this reason, the quality of the workforce is absolutely central, or, as Engberg phrased it, 'the quality of production is an expression of a function of the nature of the human material.'⁴⁵ However, since the transference of 'spiritual energies' takes place in all aspects of the nation's life, the relation between personality and production ultimately concerns the spiritual quality of the population as a whole. For this reason, Engberg's argument in the Eskilstuna speech was also central to his understanding of cultural politics.

On the broadest level, the relation between part and whole is exemplified by native language, which Engberg similarly regarded as a mirror of the nation's character, 'a reflex of its inner being'. Caring for one's native language consequently becomes 'the closest and most natural of' the people's 'cultural assignments.'⁴⁶ The production of language and steel, though, ultimately points towards the same goal: namely, to strengthen 'the voice of the Swedish spirit in the world.'⁴⁷ This position was further clarified when in 1933, Engberg described the relation between workforce and produce in terms of survival: 'In our people's struggle for existence, it all comes down to the quality of our production.'⁴⁸ Seen from Engberg's perspective,

then, the future of the nation relies in all respects on continual improvements in the population's excellence.

The Darwinian concepts actualized by Engberg, and his way of combining them with elements of historical materialism, were not in any way unique. On the contrary, his idea of a struggle towards the realm of freedom borrowed much from the socialist interpretation of evolutionary theories that informed, and were popularized by, the workers' study associations around 1900.⁴⁹ As Håkan Blomqvist summarizes it, the propagation of these perspectives became key elements in the education of the working class, and for Social Democrats in Sweden and abroad, evolutionary and anthropological theories provided a scientific framework that could validate their ideas of societal change. Just as the human species had evolved from barbarism to civilization through a continual struggle for survival, the working class paved their way to power following a revolutionary determination modelled upon evolutionary science.⁵⁰

Engberg's own interpretation of this evolutionary socialism may be compared with that of Rudolf Kjellén, a prominent conservative and political scientist whose paradoxical influence on the SAP has been documented in previous research.⁵¹ According to Kjellén's theory, each state is conceived as a direct expression of the beliefs, values, ideas, and habits of a particular people; an organism of which the individual citizens constitute organs and limbs.⁵² For Kjellén, moreover, cultural struggle is conceived as the driving force of history, and likewise forms the motor of a nation's progress: 'The competition between peoples has to be reckoned with as natural and necessary, as the very nerve of evolution, without which progress would stop and the peoples rot away like stagnant water.'⁵³

While Engberg and Kjellén each confessed to a politicized brand of Darwinism, their ideas of societal change differed profoundly. Whereas Kjellén viewed the current world order and its clash of civilizations as an unchangeable given, Engberg hoped to transform the struggle's basic conditions. What ultimately united them, however, was a belief in the necessity for the state to govern beyond the confines of the legal sphere. In this regard, Kjellén's argument

in *Staten som livsform* (1916, 'The State as a Life Form') can also speak for Engberg. Demonstrating that the modern state is defined by its interest in the well-being of the individual, providing him or her with various forms of support—from advice to economic subsidies—Kjellén continues:

It is striking that the state here shows its interest for the individual, even though no connection to the formal law or the legal order can be detected. And this interest extends beyond the material well-being of the individual. By (partly or entirely) assuming responsibility for all instances of the people's education, the state emerges as an entity with great cultural-spiritual interests. The entire cultural sphere soon appears within its range of vision, far beyond the bounds of the legal order.⁵⁴

In Engberg's art of governing, just as in Kjellén's organicist theory of the state, the citizen is not considered a subject of right, but as a member of a population whose spiritual and physical prosperity was imperative to the well-being of the state.⁵⁵ The object of cultural politics here coincides with that of the welfare state as a whole, while conversely, 'caring for and tending to the development and schooling of the powers, gifts, and capabilities of man' became the primary object of a cultural politics guided by 'evolutionary principles'.⁵⁶ As Engberg's choice of metaphor makes clear, the advancement of culture requires the state to administer the population stock's deficiencies much like a gardener tends to his grounds.⁵⁷

Returning to the previously quoted passage from *Demokratisk kulturpolitik*, the same idea is mirrored in the tasks assigned to the cultural policy of the SAP. While aiding self-help formed the basis of the party's political programme, such help could only be administered to that which was already viable: 'capable of living'.⁵⁸ As Engberg crudely puts it, the struggle for existence sees an ever-increasing demand on our 'capability and creative force'. In such a world, only the best will be fit for service and entitled to support—requiring 'the untalented' to 'stand back for the talent'.⁵⁹

Conclusions

Engberg's aesthetic ideals, conservative when judged against the standards of the cultural policy of today, have prompted later researchers to posit 'taste' as a central problematic in his political thinking. As the current investigation has demonstrated, however, such a focus disregards the most important aspects of Engberg's art of governing—thus overlooking an important key to the formative years of Swedish cultural policy.

As we have shown, Engberg's conception of artistic production coincides with a basic tenet of his idea of *Bildung*—and indeed with his vision of society's end-goal: namely, that it constitutes a realization of the individual's freedom. Engberg made it perfectly clear that the form and content of art and literature should not be regulated by the state; on the contrary, art can only be produced and experienced in freedom, delivered from the law of necessity. Engberg's cultural politics, then, does not in theory concern itself with the artworks themselves. When classical art, as it often did, figured as an ideal in his writings, he sought not to idealize the artworks themselves so much as the spiritual prowess and quality of life of its creators.

If Engberg's cultural politics did engage in the regulation and control of artistic practice, it does not adhere to the prevalent image of early cultural policy as a programme for the redistribution of bourgeois culture. As he stressed in his diagnosis of contemporary life, financial measures provide equally inadequate tools for supporting and improving the arts. Change must instead be brought about on all levels of society, fostering a free spiritual climate that simultaneously would establish Sweden as a competitive nation globally. To succeed in this mission, citizens had to be provided with aid to self-help—a gift, however, that was not to be distributed indiscriminately. On the contrary, it should only be given to those who were deemed fit for survival, thus proving themselves capable of freedom. For better or worse, Engberg never specified the criteria or practical implementation of this weeding out.

The problem to which Engberg's art of governing responded was only indirectly related to specific forms of cultural expression. While violently dismissing this and that practice or artform, a nation's aesthetic output was ultimately conceived of as an expression and measure of the population's quality. Or, to be crass, of the people's relative degeneration. Art, then, was not primarily to be understood as a means of change, but as an end in itself. As such, it constituted a measure of the success of cultural politics and the extent to which the realm of freedom was realized. Accordingly, Engberg's attempt to regulate culture was not principally directed at the 'cultural world', but towards the reality of which it was considered a function. In this respect, Engberg's care for the life of the population presupposed a 'biological' understanding of politics; a governmentality that unfolds without clear-cut borders between matter and spirit, nature and culture, and biological and political life.

Notes

- 1 This study was part of the project 'The Welfare Regime of Literature: The Function of Literature in Sweden 1937–1976', funded by the Swedish Research Council, 2019–2021 (ref. 2018-01078).
- 2 The implementation of freedom of speech never was unconditional in the liberal democracies of the West. As Rosenfeld 2001, 117–45 argues for the French Revolution and its aftermath, measures to promote the free circulation and expression of ideas also brought about new means of regulation. See also the introduction to the present volume.
- 3 When not otherwise noted, citations are taken from Engberg 1945, hereafter *ETS*.
- 4 Lindsköld 2012, 44.
- 5 See, for example, Harding 2015, 161–81.
- 6 Frenander 2014, 96.
- 7 Harding 2015, 166.
- 8 Gustavsson 1991, 194.
- 9 Vestheim 2014, 51.
- 10 For Engberg's position in the party after the death of Prime Minister Hjalmar Branting, see Karlsson 2001, 439–43. In the subsequent power struggle, Engberg sided with the left wing of the SAP against an eventually successful centrist fraction led by Per Albin Hansson. Hansson went on to be Prime Minister, and

- only reluctantly made Engberg Minister of Church and Education (at Engberg's specific request).
- 11 Beltzén & Beltzén, 1973, 256.
 - 12 Cf. Vestheim 2014, 27–53, who points to a conflict in Engberg's apparent contempt for working-class culture. Importantly, however, this does not invalidate Engberg's socialist ideology; after all, Engberg worked for the abolition of class society, and thus of the entire working class.
 - 13 Foucault 2008, 1 ff.
 - 14 Wallenstein 2010, 188–99.
 - 15 Ibid. 192.
 - 16 Hirdman 2010, 92–101.
 - 17 Klockar Linder 2014, 165.
 - 18 See also Harding 2015, 162.
 - 19 'Den blivande ecklesiastikministern' (1921), in *ETS* iii. 15: 'Denna kulturbudget är efter mitt sätt att se ... av en utomordentlig betydelse för hela vår nation och dess ställning. Det är en krigsbudget i kampen för kultur, för nationell fostran och nationell uppräckning.'
 - 20 Frenander 2014, 97; see also Johansson in this volume on the widespread militaristic rhetoric of conservative associations.
 - 21 'Den blivande ecklesiastikministern' (1921), in *ETS* iii. 20: 'en dylik urartning till kult för den råa styrkan, till kult för muskelkulturen, är ett dekadensfenomen, som det gäller att ha ögonen öppna för. Vi ha i historien sett liknande exempel vid nationers undergång förut. Den gången, då man såg gladiatorerna träda in på arenan i det gamla Rom, den gången var det också praktiskt tagit slut med den antika kulturen. Må vi här hemma se till att icke dylika tecken skola kunna med rätta uttolkas såsom bevis för, att Sverige i kulturellt avseende kommer att gå samma väg.'
 - 22 'Georges Carpentier' (1921), in *ETS* iii. 11–14.
 - 23 Cf. Harding 2015, 167.
 - 24 See *ibid.* 164–5.
 - 25 Engberg 1938a, 3: 'Till sin idé är det folkliga självstyret en fri samverkan mellan självständiga personligheter, som ha att en för alla och alla för en bära ansvaret för gemensamt väl. Utfallet av en slik samverkan beror då ytterst på den enskilde själv, på hans omsikt, insikt, skicklighet och hans redobogenhet att offra egen nytta för allmännyttan. Folkstyre och folkbildning kunna därför icke skiljas från varandra. De förutsätta varandra. Ty intet folkstyre kan varaktigt bestå och lyckas, därest det icke uppbäres av upplysta, ansvarsmedvetna och självständiga medborgare.'
 - 26 *Ibid.*: 'en strävan att i olika riktningar göra medborgarna skickade att fylla de krav, som det folkliga självstyret ställer på dem.'
 - 27 'Moralisk fostran' (1941), in *ETS* iii. 167: 'Utbildningen är en sak, bildning en annan'. With this distinction, Engberg was following the *Bildung*-tradition from

- late eighteenth-century Germany to Sweden at the turn of the twentieth century. Among Engberg's predecessors, Ellen Key deserves special mention. She made a similar distinction between abstract, specialized knowledge ('fack-bildning') and a personality-driven synthesis of knowledge ('allmän-bildning', or 'sammanmältningen af de skilda bildningsmomenten till en helhet') (Key 1897, 3–7).
- 28 Engberg 1938a, 4: 'varken kan inläras eller inövas', 'trygga medborgarnas tillträde till förvärvet av färdigheter och insikter'; see also 'Tal vid invigningen av Falu nya läroverk' (1935) in *ETS* iii. 70: 'Luckily, I almost said, the most valuable thing in art is not what one has learnt, but that which one owns without having learnt it. ... To know is one thing, to render alive and create something else' ('Och dock är det så—jag höll på att säga lyckligtvis—att det värdefullaste i konsten icke är det som man lärt sig utan det som man äger utan att ha lärt sig. ... Kunna är ett, levandegöra och skapa ett annat').
- 29 Ibid.: 'den [demokratiska kulturpolitiken] har att sörja för luft, rymd och ljus, goda förbindelser mellan andelivets olika provinser, motverka försök till isolering, ge hjälp till självhjälp åt allt livsdugligt och främja vidsyn och fördragsamhet.'
- 30 'Konstens socialisering' (1921), in *ETS* iii. 28. The concept was originally developed by the Belgian art critic Edmond Picard, and introduced to Sweden by Georg Pauli in *Konstens socialisering: ett program* (1915). See also Rapp 1978 for a discussion of its significance in Sweden at the turn of the last century.
- 31 Engberg 1936, 4: 'Den s.k. gipskattskulturen är Gudi klagat en bister verklighet. Det tarvas krafttag för att övervinna och förjaga den. Och här finns ingen annan väg att gå än att väcka själarnas längtan efter något vackrare och högre. Vägen är med andra ord den redan antydda: att i största möjliga utsträckning låta generationerna uppleva konsten.'
- 32 *ETS* iii. 27, 'Konstens socialisering', 'stilsinne', 'andliga lyftning'; see also Savolainen in this volume on the complications that may arise when this idea is translated into practice.
- 33 *ETS* iii. 27: 'Skall konsten kunna leva och blomstra, måste den inneslutas i folkets kärlek och varda ett liv i folkets eget liv'; see also Engberg 1936, 4: 'It would be a futile endeavour to establish a literary market within an alphabetic people. Literacy and the desire to read are the market's natural conditions. The same goes for art. If its products are to be demanded from the larger and broader layers, the first and necessary condition is the creation of an understanding and need for art among these layers' ('Det torde vara ett hopplöst företag att söka få marknad för skönlitteratur inom ett analfabetiskt folk. Läskunnighet och läslust äro här marknadens naturliga förutsättningar. Sammalunda med konsten. Skola dess alster röna efterfrågan från större och bredare lager så torde den första och oundgängliga förutsättningen vara den, att det bland dessa lager skapats både förståelse och behov av konst').
- 34 Cf. Hylland & Bjurström 2018, 1: 'Aesthetics and politics meet whenever cultural policy gives art any form of agency. Such agency is given to art when it is

- supposed to fulfil other functions and represent other kinds of value than its intrinsic value—in other words, when art is promoted for the sake of something and not for art's sake.' We would argue that Hylland & Bjurström's definition does not cover the full implications of cultural politics in the period of our study.
- 35 Engberg 1938b, 11, 14.
- 36 Quoted in Beltzén & Beltzén 1973, 247: 'Ty vi måste förverkliga oss själva. Historiens mening är sålunda frihetens förverkligande, och vi själva ha i våra händer att låta denna mening gå i uppfyllelse ... Vårt "gudarike" betecknar början till mänsklighetens verkliga historia, där "förhistorien" i mörker och trældom är slut och frihetens rike tar arv efter nödvändighetens.'
- 37 See Marx & Engels 1970, 54 for their vision of liberation from the division of labour and restrictions to an exclusive sphere of activity; see also Marx 1972, 124 for self-realization and 'real freedom' as realized through 'really free labour', exemplified by 'the composing of music', an activity that is both free and demands 'the greatest effort'.
- 38 Schiller 1962, fifth letter.
- 39 See Schiller 1962, sixth letter for the negative judgement on the state and the conclusion that the only hope is 'eine höhere Kunst'.
- 40 'Framtidsmusik' (1918), in *ETS* i. 30: 'människornas medvetande som utgör bas för deras sociala tillvaro, utan det är denna sociala tillvaro själv ... som utgör basen för deras medvetande.' Note that Karlsson (2001, 444) sees Engberg's view of culture as less deterministic than the more orthodox Marxist interpretation. Engberg considered culture to be conditioned, not determined, by its material base.
- 41 *ETS* iii. 17: 'huru vi skola få fram en svensk nationell kultur', 'frågan om en omläggning av vårt samhälles ekonomiska och sociala liv.'
- 42 It is important to note that the concept of socialization not only applies in art. In 'Socialisering' (1936) in *ETS* ii. 95, for example, Engberg explains that 'socialization, reasonably, means nothing else than the process whereby society continuously adapts the industry according to the supportive demands of the people' ('Med socialisering förstås rimligtvis ingenting annat än samhällets fortgående anpassning av näringslivet efter folkförsörjningens behov'). Here, however, socialization nevertheless becomes a means to secure the population's 'capability and creativity' ('duglighet och skaparkraft'), ensuring that 'our people, both spiritually and physically meet the demands of their tasks to the highest possible degree' ('vårt folk både fysiskt och andligt i största möjliga grad dugliggöres för sina uppgifter').
- 43 'Tal vid invigningen av Falu nya läroverk' (1935), in *ETS* iii. 78: 'Det ligger obestridligen något riktigt i den redan av Hegel företrädde meningen, att i ett arbetes resultat är själva arbetsprocessen på en gång bevarad och upphävd. Produkten liksom uppsummerar och förkroppsligar alla de andliga energier, som varit i verksamhet och utlösts i och under arbetsprocessen. Här sammansmälta

- intelligens, vilja och känsla. Produkten blir, om man så vill, en funktion av egenskaperna hos den levande arbetskraften, av personligheten själv.’
- 44 *ETS* iii. 78–9: ‘Ju längre en slik utbildning av den levande arbetskraften drivits, desto större är förutsättningarna för en fullödlig arbetsprodukt, det må gälla den materiella eller andliga produktionen.’
- 45 ‘De vuxnas bildningsarbete’ (1933), in *ETS* iii. 48: ‘Man kan med fullt fog påstå, att produktionens kvalitet är ett uttryck för en funktion av människomaterialets beskaffenhet.’
- 46 ‘Modersmålet’ (1922), in *ETS* iii. 32, 34: ‘en reflex av sitt eget väsen,’ ‘den naturligaste och närmast till hands liggande av,’ ‘kulturella uppgifter.’
- 47 *Ibid.* 34: ‘den svenska andens stämma i världen’; see also Engberg’s speech ‘Tal vid invigningen av Högre allm. läroverkets för flickor nybyggnad i Örebro’ (1938), in *ETS* ii. 136, where he goes so far as to speak of personal freedom and *Bildung* as the basis of global power: ‘For a small people that, with all its force and determination, seeks, entices, develops, and schools the high-grade talents given them perchance, providing scope for them within an order of things that guards their personal freedom and independence, great cultural power lies within the range of possibility’ (‘Ett litet folk, som med all kraft målmedvetet uppsparar, framlockar, utvecklar och skolar vad det till äventyrs kan äga av högvärdiga begåvningar och låter dem komma till sin rätt i en tingens ordning, som hägnar deras personliga frihet och självständighet, har möjlighet till kulturell stormaktsställning’).
- 48 ‘De vuxnas bildningsarbete’ (1933), in *ETS* iii. 48: ‘I vårt folks kamp för tillvaron är det främst på kvaliteten av dess produktionsresultat det kommer an.’
- 49 In ‘Minnesdagen’ (1931), in *ETS* ii. 89, written in memory of August Palm’s first public speech on the subject of socialism in 1881, Engberg recalled that Swedish social democracy was formed at the same time as Charles Darwin’s theories were popularized: ‘It was the time when all of life’s problems were brought up for discussion. In moral, religious, literary, and artistic regards, the 1880s undoubtedly put a number of old superstitions and prejudices, artificiality, affectedness, and blind faith, out of the way. The natural sciences shaped the view of the world. The theory of evolution shed new light on the whole of organic life. Thinking was conquered by Darwinism. Spencer was studied and adopted. In all those passionate controversies over the freedom of religion, free thinking, utilitarianism, Darwinism, protectionism, naturalism, rationalism, and many other “isms”, Swedish socialism developed its spiritual physiognomy’ (‘Det var den tid, då livets alla problem ställdes under debatt. Moraliskt, religiöst, litterärt och konstnärligt rörde 80-talet otvivelaktigt upp med en mängd gamla fördomar och vidskepelser, förkonstling, tillgjordhet och övertro. Respektlöshet, tvivel, kritik och omvärdering av alla värden voro karakteristiska för tiden. Den naturvetenskapliga världsbilden slog igenom. Utvecklingsläran ställde hela det organiska livet i ny belysning. Darwinismen erövrade tänkesättet. Spencer studerades

- och anammades. I alla dessa lidelsefulla fejder om religionsfrihet, fritänkeri, utilism, darwinism, protektionism, naturalism, rationalism och många andra "ismer" fick svensk socialism sin andliga fysionomi"). Unsurprisingly, Engberg also underscored 'the epoch's significant interest in *Bildung*' ('epokens starka bildningsintresse').
- 50 Blomqvist 2006, 188–9.
- 51 See Gunneflo 2015, 35–7; Hall 2000, 261.
- 52 See Kjellén 1916; on the notion of the state as an organism, see in particular *ibid.* 31 ff.
- 53 Kjellén, quoted in Björck 1946, 62: 'Vi måste därför räkna med folkens konkurrens såsom naturlig och nödvändig, såsom själfva nerven i utvecklingen, utan hvilken framsteget skulle stanna och folken ruttna bort som stillastående vatten'; see also Kjellén 1916, 33 for a similar argument.
- 54 Kjellén 1916, 11: 'Det måste frappa, att staten här visar sig intresserad för individens gärning utan att något sammanhang längre kan påvisas med den formella rätten eller samfundsordningen. Och detta intresse stannar ingalunda vid individens materiella välgång. Genom att (helt eller delvis) öfvertaga folkuppfostran i alla instanser framträder staten med stora andliga kulturintressen. Hela kulturlivet visar sig till sist falla inom dess horisont, långt bortom rättens gränser.'
- 55 Engberg 1938b, 10 notably places his discussion 'completely outside the bounds of politics' ('helt och hållet utanför politikens ramar'), concerned with 'a description of essentials that concern all of us, crossing and exceeding political differences' ('en framställning av väsentligheter, som över och tvärsigenom allt vad politiska skiljelinjer heter, angå oss alla'). See also Foucault 2009, 79 for his compact analysis of the shift from legal subjects to population.
- 56 'Tal vid invigningen av Eskilstuna nya läroverk' (1935), in *ETS* iii. 78: 'Vården och ansen om människans krafter och gåvor, deras utveckling, dugliggörande och skolning'; Karlsson 2001, 444: 'evolutionära principer'.
- 57 In an account of the art of the ancient Greeks, Engberg, in 'Tal vid invigningen av Karlshamns nya läroverk' (1937), in *ETS* iii. 126 similarly uses the gardener as a central metaphor for the principle of harmony that governed their life: 'The intellectual gifts of the soul were to be brought into blossom. However, the ideal was not the wild, unrestrained, and lawless, not the flora of the jungle, but that of the expert gardener. The object was to apply the right measure of care and discipline, to instill the proper order, to each of the soul's talents' ('Själens olika gåvor skulle bringas att slå ut i blom. Men det var icke det vildvuxna, det regellösa och tygellösa som skulle eftersträvas, icke djungelns flora, men väl den skicklige trädgårdsmästarens. Det gällde att åt varje själsgåva ge den ans, den tuktan, det skick, som motsvarade det rätta måttet'); see also Foucault 2008, 15–16 on the altered relation between governmentality and nature since the late eighteenth century: 'For political economy, nature is not an original and

reserved region on which the exercise of power should not impinge, on pain of being illegitimate. Nature is something that runs under, through, and in the exercise of governmentality.

58 Engberg 1938a, 4: 'livsdugligt'.

59 'Bort med spärrarna' (1943), in *ETS* iii. 217: 'duglighet och skaparkraft ... den obegåvade ... träda tillbaka för den begåvade'.